

Tsou, Leslie M (London)

From: Schulz, Kirsten A
Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2005 10:43 AM
To: Tsou, Leslie M
Subject: RE: Prime Minister's Questions - Rendition

R 206

Leslie,

RELEASED IN FULL

Thanks, Kirsten

From: Tsou, Leslie M
Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2005 10:07 AM
To: Schulz, Kirsten A
Subject: FW: Prime Minister's Questions - Rendition

From: Lancaster, Justine M
Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2005 10:06 AM
To: Johnson, David T
Cc: Skinner, Charles B; Connelly, Maura; Donegan, James E(POL); Tsou, Leslie M
Subject: Prime Minister's Questions - Rendition

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (LD): Last week, the Prime Minister acknowledged that he had been aware of the United States' policy of rendition for quite some time. If terrorist suspects are not being transported to a third country for the purposes of torture or mistreatment, will he explain to the House for what purpose they are being transported?

The Prime Minister: First, let me again make it clear to the right hon. Gentleman that this Government are completely and totally opposed to torture or ill-treatment in any set of circumstances. Our country is a signatory to the United Nations convention against the use of torture, and we will continue to uphold its provisions absolutely. Rendition does not simply apply in those circumstances; it can apply in other circumstances, as the United States Secretary of State has made clear. To be fair, they have also said that they are totally opposed to the use of torture or ill-treatment in any circumstances.

Mr. Kennedy: In welcoming precisely what the Prime Minister has just said, does he not therefore acknowledge that our country is surely under a legal and moral obligation to investigate why flights are being allowed to pass through our country for rendition purposes? Full inquiries are now taking place in Italy, Spain, Germany and Canada? Why are they not taking place in the United Kingdom?

[37180] **The Prime Minister:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has just passed me a copy of his parliamentary answer from, I think, a few days ago, which states:

"Careful research by officials has been unable to identify any occasions since 11 September 2001, or earlier in the Bush Administration, when we received a request for permission by the United States for a rendition through UK territory or airspace, nor are we otherwise aware of such a case."

On United States Government flights coming in and out, those take place for a whole series of reasons. We receive visits from people from the United States Government the entire time.—[*Interruption.*] I have to say that the Liberal Democrats are quite extraordinary sometimes. The idea that we should investigate every time that a United States Government plane flies into this country is completely absurd.